Hemicyon

Hemicyon, also known as the "dog-bear" (literally "half dog", from Greek ἡμι- *hēmi-* (half) + κύων *kúōn* (dog)), is an extinct genus of hemicyonine bear, which probably originated in Eurasia but was found in Europe, Asia and North America during the Miocene epoch (15.97 to 12.75 million years ago), existing for approximately 16 to 13 mya.[1] *Hemicyon* is the best-known genus in the Hemicyoninae, a subfamily intermediate between bears and their canid ancestors but most often classified as bears.[2] Hemicyonid bears evolved from dogs and should not be confused with Amphicyonids (bear-dogs), which are their own separate family of carnivores.

Morphology

Hemicyon was about 1.5 metres (5 ft) long, and 70 centimetres (28 in) tall, with somewhat tiger-like proportions and carnassal blades on its teeth for cutting meat. *Hemicyon* is widely accepted to have been hypercarnivorous and highly predaceous. Unlike modern bears, *Hemicyon* walked on its toes; it was not plantigrade, but digitigrade, with long metapodials. This suggests that *Hemicyon* must have been an active hunter and a good runner, and presumably hunted by pursuing prey on open ground.[3] In life, the genus would have looked something like a combination of a dog and a bear.

Fossil sites

Species of *Hemicyon* are recognized in the medial Hemingfordian (ca. 18 million years ago) Thomas Farm site local fauna. This record of *Hemicyon* represents the earliest occurrence of this genus in North America. The Thomas Farm *Hemicyon* is very closely related to European representatives from the early Burdigalian (ca. 20 million years ago).[4] Other *Hemicyon* fossil finds include: *H. teilhardi* from the Middle Miocene Hujialian Formation in the Linxia Basing, Gansu Province, China; an Early Miocene *Hemicyon* from Lanzhu Basin Shan Mong fauna, China; *Hemicyon* of the Mid-Miocene Dongxiang and Laogou Formation in Linxia Basin on the northeast margin of the Tibetan Plateau; Mid-Miocene *H. sansaniensis* of Arroyo del Val area, Villafeliche, Zaragoza Province, Spain; Mid-Miocene *H. mayorali* of Tarazona de Aragon, Spain; a *Hemicyon* found at the Somosaguas site, Pozuelo de Alarcón, Madrid; *H. sansaniensis* from the Mid-Miocene Anchitherium fauna of İnönü locality, NW Ankara; a Lower Miocene (Eggenburgian-Ottnangian: ca. 20 Ma) *H stehlini* found in the coal bed of Banovići Basin, Bosnia; an Early Hemingfordian

Hemicyon

Temporal range:

Early Miocene–Late Miocene

Pre€ € O S D C P T J K PgN

Hemicyon sansaniensis

Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Mammalia
Order:	Carnivora
Family:	Ursidae
Subfamily:	†Hemicyoninae
Genus:	†*Hemicyon* Lartet, 1851

Species

- †*H. barbouri*, Lartet, 1851
- †*H. californicus*
- †*H. cf. stehlini*
- †*H. gargan*
- †*H. goeriachensis*
- †*H. hareni*
- †*H. sansaniensis*
- †*H. mayorali*
- †*H. stehlini*
- †*H. teilhardi*
- †*H. ursinus*

hemicyonid (ca. 16 Ma) from the Pollack Farm Fauna, Delaware; and an excellent *Hemicyon* specimen from the Miocene Sante Fe Formation, New Mexico.

- †*H. youngi*

Hemicyonidae fossil evidence may also have been found in the Gaillard Cut Local Fauna, former Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, but it is indeterminant with Amphicyonidae. Despite its close proximity to South America, given the geological context, the Gaillard Cut Local Fauna are distinctly North American fauna and the age of this assemblage is dated between 19.5 and 14 Ma.[5]

References

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